

News & Views...

to encourage and inform women involved in ministry

This is the last issue of News and Views I am editing, as I am stepping down from the Women's Ministry Team. It has been a huge joy and privilege to serve on this team, and it's now time to hand over to others. I am delighted that Julia Jones has agreed to take over chairing the team.

A highlight in 2007 was our involvement in the Cheltenham Bible Festival, where we were able to provide a variety of sessions for women in different situations. Our aim as a team is to encourage and equip women of all ages to serve the Lord. We try in *News and Views* to provide a 'notice board' for resources which may be helpful to you, where you are. A couple of regular readers have written in explaining how they have used the ideas given in *News and Views*:

Jill Finnie has been a minister's wife for many years. She writes: *Reading the excellent book reviews in News & Views often creates a*

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desire to get hold of the book and read it, yet so often the pressures of family and church life cause good intentions to be forgotten. But attending a monthly book club ensures the opportunity of enjoying a "good read." A ladies' reading group has been started by the Grace Baptist Church in Sudbury and is attended by several of us from Lawshall Free Church. We meet on the last Friday of each month in various homes to discuss the chosen book. Our group is made up of a cross section of ladies, in age, careers, family responsibilities, Christian experience and church backgrounds. The books are varied - some old, some new, some devotional, historical, doctrinal, biographical, others dealing with contemporary issues. The list is decided well in advance so we can borrow from friends, hunt in the church library, order second hand off e-bay or buy at the

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previous session. Many publishers offer excellent deals for reading groups buying in bulk!

We share how the book has affected us, blessed and challenged, made us think, surprised and thrilled us and led us to appreciate more and more God's wonderful grace, love and enabling power as expressed so often in the reviews mentioned!

Many have said that without the group they would not be reading, others have admitted they have grown in their Christian understanding and all agree that reading and discussing together is a great encouragement and blessing. Why not start a Christian Ladies' Reading Group in your area?

Jo Ford and Stacy Eltiti write from Colchester

We thought you might be interested in hearing about what we are doing in our own local church, Greenstead Evangelical Free Church in Colchester. After attending the Ann Benton talk on Friendship given at the 2005 Pwllheli conference, we decided to set up a young women's Bible study group. We were unsure where to start until we had received our first copy of News and Views. In it there was a book review of the Biblical Womanhood Bible study guide by Sarah Young. We found the bible study a useful tool in challenging our ideas and myths about a women's role in the home and church and examining what the Bible really says on these matters. Since then we have gone on to listening to the cd series of Ruth by Jane McNabb, which we also found advertised in News and Views and William Taylor's cd series on Heavenly Citizens, advertised at the London Women's Convention. We are currently going through the book "Battles Christians Face" by Vaughan Roberts.

Please note: if you are in a reading group and want to order 10 or more copies of a book, Jonathan Carswell's company 10 of those.com is there to help with a significant discount. Contact: 10ofthose.com c/o Servoll, 13 Airport

Road, Belfast, BT3 9DY. tel. 028 90 73 85 37 or website www.10ofthose.com

Do keep your letters (or emails!) coming. We love to hear from you. Correspondence can be sent to team member Elisabeth Smyth, at the FIEC office (see page 16).

"...all agree that reading and discussing together is a great encouragement and blessing."

PASTORAL ISSUES

Singleness: A positive perspective

Genevieve Jennings is a Pastoral Worker at Eden Baptist Church, Cambridge

First of all some reality points to recognise

Most people want to be married, and that is the normal state of affairs. It doesn't help me when married people point out all the benefits of singleness because, when you ask them, they'd usually rather be married if given a choice.

Most singles, if you ask them, don't see singleness as a gift, but as a burden/trial. If you think of it in terms of a gift, it's one that most singles would want to give back in exchange for a different one (marriage). Most singles whom I have come across, as well as not wanting the gift of singleness, wouldn't actually say that they have it – they're just single! However, God is sovereign and his Word is true. According to the Scriptures, both singleness and marriage are gifts and he doesn't give first-rate gifts (i.e. marriage) to some of his children but only second-rate ones (singleness) to others.

So, how do we live lives that are in line with that Biblical line of thought, and which help those of us who are single not merely "to cope" (as if we were hanging on by our fingernails), but to actually live full, joyful, exuberant lives that both celebrate his goodness and glorify God?

Look ahead to the next 10/20 years: what sort of woman do you want to be i.e. what sort of character do you want to have? The answer to that question doesn't depend on whether you're married or not. The standard for 'marrieds' (a term used henceforth) and for singles is the same: love and consecration unto the Lord (Matthew 22: 37). Therefore, *let your relationship with Jesus grow in its reliance upon him and in intimacy, understanding and love as much as it possibly can. Don't set a 'ceiling' to that.*

Whether you are married or not, He is meant to be "the Friend who sticks closer than a brother". As well as Saviour, Lord and King, whether you are married or not, He is meant to be your "Beloved" (cf Song of Songs). For that reason, I would suggest the following:

Principles to Follow

- 1 **Spend time with God in his Word** (privately and publicly – i.e. church): *become a woman of the Word.*
- 2 **Develop your prayer life** – private and public: *become a woman of prayer.*
- 3 **Serve within the church and outside of it** (the home, workplace, community, etc): *become a servant.*

“...he doesn't give first-rate gifts (i.e. marriage) to some of his children but only second-rate ones (singleness) to others.”

- 4 **Develop your relationships** (with people of the same sex/couples): learn to appreciate relationships on all sorts of different levels - very close, close, not so close, casual, etc; enjoy people (which, as well as being a blessing for you, is one way of blessing them).
- 5 **Develop your career:** you may end up marrying, but you may not. Either way, you

don't want to waste opportunities or spend your life

“God can be trusted to give you the best in your life, and believing that is partly a decision of your will, in reliance upon God.”

with half your heart and energies rooted in an imaginary existence. Life is short: live it to the full for him (cf the parable of the talents). *God can be trusted to give you the best in your life, and believing that is partly a decision of your will, in reliance upon God. He deserves the best from you.*

- 6 **Develop your hobbies/outside interests:** as well as the fact that being single is a great chance to do this (which, for whatever reason, financial, health, marriage, etc, you may not always have), you don't want to become a boring person whose main topic of conversation and interest is getting married! Do all the things that you can do *now* (or as soon as is realistic). If you *do* end up getting married, you don't want to end up looking back on that period of singleness with regret because of the wasted opportunities. If you *don't* end up marrying, you don't want to look back at your life with regret for the same reason.
- 7 **Be 'real' with God:** pour out your heart before him about all your hopes, dreams, disappointments, loneliness, sadness, etc, **but don't give in to self-pity.** Self-pity, if not

checked, can often lead to depression. Remember that *happiness is a by-product* and comes from seeking first God's kingdom – happiness isn't a goal in itself.

8 **Develop a thankful heart:**

make giving thanks a hallmark of your life. It's easy to allow either the flesh or the Enemy to put a magnifying glass over the one area in your life that you're not satisfied with until it totally fills your vision. It's right to be aware of your struggles and desires and to bring those to the Lord (cf Hannah), but to also *make a point of giving thanks* for the many blessings that you've received (the greatest of which is Jesus himself).

9 **Lighten up!** Jesus, and his gospel, can't be taken too seriously: your own life can. Celebrate him today.

As a final note, I would also add that if you honestly believe, before the Lord, that your basic identity is so intrinsically bound up in being married that you perceive it as a truly central and inextricable part of your life, you might consider having a word with your pastor or another mature Christian whom you trust about any positive steps that can be taken in that direction. It's not necessarily wrong to be pro-active in seeking a *Christian* marriage partner.

However, even in this, be careful. Everything in our lives – and especially that which is most dear to us – needs to be laid before the Lord (cf Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22). It may be, if we're not careful, that God will let us have whatever it is that we're hankering

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“It may be, if we're not careful, that God will let us have whatever it is that we're hankering for, but send ‘leanness into [our] soul’.”

for, but send "leanness into [our] soul". Please note, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."

Hence, be prepared, if you really think that it's right, to be prayerfully pro-active in this, in conjunction

with a trusted mature Christian, but **set a high standard of godliness for your required partner, and leave the answer JOYFULLY in God's hands**. It's been said that "God gives the best to him who leaves the choice to him". You can't 'outgive' God. He loves us and knows what is best for us, as well as what will most bring glory to himself which, after all, should be our ultimate desire - married or not.

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This article, with full Bible references, can be found on the Eden Church website:

www.eden-cambridge.org

INTERNATIONAL FOCUS

Women's Ministry in Hungary

I was born in a pastor's family and by God's grace met the Saviour at age 13. In the same year all my 3 siblings opened their hearts for Jesus and we were baptized on the same day by our wonderful father.

My parents were involved in the distribution of smuggled Bibles but it was discovered and my father lost his preacher's license. A difficult period followed in our family life (no home, no ministry, and no income) but we experienced the faithfulness and goodness of our Heavenly Father who tested and strengthened our faith early.

My husband's story is almost the same. We both have been on fire for Jesus but did not think of pastoral ministry. He became a

scientist and I studied foreign trade, but worked in a library after our children were born.

“I can not be thankful enough to HIM, the Lord of all, that he allows me to be part of his saving grace, bringing the good news to the unsaved and encouraging Christian women.”

Before the political changes God made clear to my husband that new churches had to be planted all over Hungary. After the Berlin wall collapsed it became possible and 16 years ago we started witnessing to our neighbours whereas before we were too busy in our local church. The soil breaking was slow, but eventually God established a new church of 100 people. Most of them are the same age as our 3 children, since Jesus used them primarily in witnessing to their friends and school-mates.

This new ministry changed my life, because most of the meetings have been held in our own home. So I am busy with cleaning, baking and making gallons of tea every week. I also started an evangelistic Bible study for women which is still my joy to do.

By now all of our children are married with Christian partners and they continue working with us in our local church and elsewhere. God has opened new fields of ministry for me as our children left home for their new families. I am serving as the president on the women’s board of the Hungarian Baptist Union. The pastor’s wives are mainly on my heart. We have been able to organize 2-3 day conferences for women in different age groups each year. Instead of a lot of presentations we kept the programme very simple and found that the greatest need of the pastor’s wives was met when we listened to each other and had good prayer fellowship. I am also leading the women’s track of the Hungarian Evangelical Alliance. Once a month the women’s ministry leaders of the different denominations come together for sharing and

praying. Jesus has established love and openness among us. I also work with the board of Hope for Europe

Women in Leadership. This brings me in touch with many women also beyond our borders.

It is so humbling to see how my Lord and Master has opened the door ever wider as my family

responsibilities shrunk.

I can not be thankful enough to HIM, the Lord of all, that he allows me to be part of his saving grace, bringing the good news to the unsaved and encouraging Christian women.

Our local church has started a building project. The need for it is evident but the burden of the work is heavy since most of our members are young families with new babies and financial challenges of their own. But praise God we are seeing him at work and trust him also with our future needs.

*Your sister in Christ,
Ildikó Kovács
Budapest, Hungary*

BOOK REVIEWS

StraightTalk: your issues, your problems, your solutions

Lisa Stadler. Christian Focus.

ISBN 1845502604, ISBN-13 9781845502607. £6.99

This is a book for young people, about twelve upwards, dealing directly with the issues they or their friends may be facing. Lisa Stadler writes directly from her own extensive experience of working with teenagers. This book is very readable and brings the perspective of God's Word to bear on each of the issues addressed. Each chapter begins with a real life story. I would recommend this not only for teenagers, but for people working with them. There are, for example, sensitive insights into what it is like for youngsters to go through the divorce of their parents, what it is like to live with step-parents, and the tensions that can arise with step-brothers or sisters. When you have read this book, you will probably want to buy several more to give away.

Intimate Issues 21 Questions Christian Women Ask About Sex

Linda Dillow and Lorraine Pintus.

Kingsway. ISBN-10: 1842910205 ISBN-13: 978-1842910207

(Note: if this is not available there are many used copies available on Amazon)

A thousand Christian women were asked 'If you could have 2 questions answered about the sexual relationship between a husband and a wife what would they be?' The most frequently asked questions became the chapter titles for this book.

Addressed to married women, writers wish to see Christian wives growing in their sexuality from God's perspective. The first two questions: "What does God think about sex?" and "How can I be godly and sensuous?" are foundational to the book. The authors bravely examine these and other issues all too frequently only addressed by secular society. They move onto painful experiences and subjects such as guilt, sexual abuse and husbands and pornography. Many Christian women feel alone facing these issues. We may feel ashamed and easily assume other Christian women do not have similar burdens. However we all live in a sinful and broken world and it is vital that we support each other as Christian women seeking to honour God in our intimate lives.

Finally there are those practical questions women are often too embarrassed to discuss. The authors' wealth of experience talking with women coupled with extensive wider reading lends authority to this section. However, it does become apparent that the authors are writing to an American readership and some of their practical suggestions may seem bizarre and a little too wild to travel across the pond!

The authors intend to be "specific enough to be helpful, but sensitive enough not to offend". I think they achieve this balance, although some readers may find this book too explicit. We do need to hear God's voice on these issues. The world bombards us with its view of sex. We need to fill our minds and enjoy our loving creator's purpose for our sexuality so we are 'transformed by the renewing of our minds' and our marriages 'shine as stars in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation'.

(Review supplied by a regular reader of News & Views.)

Shopping for Time: How to Do It All and Not Be Overwhelmed

Carolyn Mahaney, Nicole Whitacre, Kristin Chesemore,

Janelle Bradshaw

Crossway ISBN-10: 1581349130 ISBN-13: 978-1581349139

This is a very different read to Carolyn Mahaney's previous books, *Feminine Appeal* and *Girl-Talk*. On the surface this book holds less theological weight but in reality, being overwhelmed with

doing is often what stops us living out Biblical womanhood as we should. The aim of the book is to encourage us to order our lives in a godly way.

Written with all three daughters it's chatty, chummy and almost in the style of a long magazine article. It's easy to imagine them

writing it around the lunch table which I have to admit meant that it sometimes felt a little too 'in-house' and American. However don't let that put you off because I found it practical, challenging and rooted in Scripture. They manage to present valuable tips in a way that is flexible rather than legalistic. For instance, they are adamant from Scripture of the need to regularly spend time with the Lord. Yet although they champion the habit of rising at 5am to do so, they acknowledge that this might be too early for some!

Another plus is the books brevity and simplicity which is appealing to unenthusiastic readers and those who say they're just too busy to read. It would also be a good little book to discuss in groups. *(Jane McNabb)*

If it's not too much trouble?

The challenge of the aged parent

Ann Benton.

Christian Focus. ISBN 1845503023

ISBN-13 9781845503024. £5.99

This book is written especially for those people who find themselves caring on a daily basis for elderly relatives.

Having been the primary carer for her father-in-law, Ann writes from first hand experience. She is honest about the cost, but she also describes the rewards.

Daylight at Midnight

Jane McNabb

Authentic ISBN 9781850787563 £5.99

Those who have enjoyed Jane's ministry at Pwllheli will want to buy this book; a readable and challenging devotional book based on the life of Esther. The main theme is the sovereignty of God even through the darkest times. The applications are brought right up to date with lively illustrations and anecdotes. This would make a good gift for women in your church.

Above all this is a godly perspective on the subject. Christ is our example of selfless service and compassionate ministry, and as we surrender to him in caring for others, our fellowship with him is deepened. This book should be read by any Christian involved in ministry to others, for even if we are not caring for elderly relatives it gives valuable insight into the situation faced by many around us. As with all Ann's books, it is easy to read and hard to put down.

World-Proof your Kids: Raising children unstained by the world

Tim Sisemore, with Ruth Sisemore

Christian Focus ISBN 978 84550 275 1 £7.99

Dr Sisemore is one of America's leading child and adolescent Christian psychologists, which means he has a wealth of experience dealing with all manner of issues affecting young people today. This is a powerful analysis of how today's permissive and consumer 'me first' culture impacts children, and how we can train them in counter-cultural godly ways of living. I found this book not only challenging, but deeply encouraging as it shows how the truth and power of the Word of God can be effective in everyday situations. Each chapter deals with a Christ-like characteristic (eg. love, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness); how this is undermined by today's culture; and how to cultivate this virtue in ourselves (which is fundamental) and our children. Each chapter ends with a list of very practical suggestions for pre-school and school age children, and teenagers. I have found it helpful to use the different chapters as a basis for my own daily prayers for our family. I would strongly recommend it to other parents.

The Mother who seeks after God:

Daily Devotions for Busy Mums

Laura Martin. Christian Focus. ISBN 1845502744, ISBN-13 9781845502744. £7.99

How can a mother be busy and godly? By being rooted in the Word of God, and by praying through the different challenges and pressures daily life brings. Laura Martin provides one month of daily devotions, based on thirty character traits to be sought after by Christian mothers. Each is based on just one verse, but there are further texts for study and questions for reflection. Laura writes from her own experience as a busy mum, and this book would make an ideal gift for young mothers in your church.

Voices against Injustice: Ten Christians who spoke out for Justice

Catherine House. Christian Focus. ISBN 1845502809, ISBN-13

9781845502805. £4.99

Christian Focus has an extensive list of excellent books for children and young people. This is one of them, and it would make a great gift for Christian youngsters: ten inspiring accounts of people who have made a difference. Catherine House not only deals with famous campaigners, such as Elizabeth Fry, but she also brings the book right up to date with a moving testimony from a Eritrean Christian, who was imprisoned because of his faith in one of the now notorious shipping containers. While none of these individuals were perfect, each of them had courage to stand against injustice. In a celebrity culture where people are adulated for the most shallow reasons, young people need better role models such as these. Each chapter includes discussion questions, and resources for further reading or action.

Ruth: Talks given by Jane McNabb at Pwllheli 2006

CDs (2) available from STV Videos, PO Box 299, Bromley, BR2 9XB £5.00 each (incl p&p)

This is an easy to listen to series on Ruth. Jane's manner of speech is clear and keeps you focused. She presents the context for the book of Ruth and highlights the different choices that Elimelech, Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah made and the consequences that followed. Ruth and Orpah were faced with the same choice: Ruth looked beyond her own problems and trusted God in following Naomi to Bethlehem, while Orpah rejected God, returned to Moab and was never heard of again. Jane goes on to describe the Godly character of Boaz and God's providence in placing Ruth in the right place at the right time. The relationship between Ruth and Naomi is held up as an example of true friendship between older and younger women. The listener is challenged to count the cost in following Christ in difficult situations, develop friendships with older and younger women in the church, trust in God's providence, and grow as women of noble character. Finally, Jane encourages the listeners to not only pray for themselves but also reminds us of the need to pray for the men within our church.

Jo Ford and Stacy Eltiti, Greenstead Evangelical Free Church, Colchester

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

- **Bristol Women's Conference—Saturday 1 March 10am-4.15pm**
 Kensington Baptist Church, Bristol
GROUNDED IN GRACE
 Main Speaker: Lizzie Smallwood
 A great day of Bible teaching, prayer and fellowship for Christian women of all ages.
 Visit: www.bristolwomensconference.org or email info@bristolwomensconference.org
- **Lincoln Ladies' Conference—Saturday 1 March 1pm-5pm**
 Thomas Cooper Memorial Evangelical Baptist Church, Lincoln
LIFE'S RICH TAPESTRY—Proverbs 31
 Speaker: Ann Benton
 Contact: Jo Ryland joandphil.ryland@ntlworld.com
- **South East Wales Ladies' Conference— Saturday 19 April 10am-3.30pm**
 Malpas Road Evangelical Church, Newport
A WOMAN'S PLACE
 Speaker: Jane McNabb
 Contact: Elaine Adams 01600 713148
- **FIEC Young Women's Conference Liverpool – Saturday 19 April 10am-4.30pm**
 Bethel Church, Green Lane, Liverpool
GOD ALONE...ALONE WITH GOD, A DAY TO REFLECT AND REFOCUS
 For women in the 18-30s age group.
 £10 waged, £7 unwaged,
 Lunch provided and bookstall available throughout the day
 Contact: Jenny Oliver 01600 713148 jenoliver17@hotmail.com or visit
www.fiecyoungwomen.com for a booking form

FOR MINISTERS' WIVES

Interview with Jane McNabb

Jane McNabb, a member of The Women's Ministry Team and whose husband, Wes, is pastor of The Slade Evangelical Church, is interviewed by fellow team member Elisabeth Smyth

Looking back, are there any particular ways in which you can see the Lord was preparing you for your ministry as a pastor's wife?

I became a Christian at 9. I was influenced greatly by my parents who were not only Christians but very committed to the Lord's work. Our family was also close to our minister's family and so I had real insight into the challenges and privileges of church ministry. I remember always being moved at missionary meetings and I think was generally aware that at some point I would be involved myself in full time Christian Ministry. I had many opportunities to develop the gifts God gave me through responsibilities in youth group, school and college Christian Unions, camp work, beach mission, secular work as a teacher and just generally getting stuck in at church. When I met Wes we both had a strong sense of 'calling' and that was confirmed with Christians recognising our gifts and the right doors opening.

What have been the encouragements and discouragements?

The greatest encouragements are seeing people become Christians and then grow in their faith and ministry. We've had some fantastic Baptismal services and those are some of the highlights of each year! I love helping to run Christianity Explored groups and discipleship classes and am always disappointed when the privilege of leadership is shared out...very selfish I know!

I guess that the greatest discouragements over the years have usually come from pastoral problems (involving sin issues), unhelpful criticism and disunity in the church. The problem is that because I'm a sinner too I don't

always handle things as well as I should...and that's even more of a discouragement.

How do you relate to the other ladies in the church? Is it possible for the pastor's wife to have real deep friendships within the local church? Are you expected to be everyone's best friend?

It depends on your definition of 'friendship'! In my book a true friend is loving and truthful and is brave enough to challenge as well as encourage. Going by that definition I think that it's essential to develop deep friendships with other women in the church- not just for their sake but mine! If I as the minister's wife am not willing to display vulnerability and a willingness to be accountable then it's less likely there will be openness amongst the other women in the church. This is sometimes a struggle for me because I am quite shy and don't like pushing myself onto others especially with those who seem to hold me at a bit of a distance. That's not to say that there aren't women who I naturally get on with better than others. The challenge then is to watch myself with gossip and obvious favouritism that excludes others.

What would you most like to see the Lord doing in the lives of Christian women in the UK today?

"In my book a true friend is loving and truthful and is brave enough to challenge as well as encourage."

We waste so much time comparing ourselves with other women. I feel that we are often so busy trying to 'have it all' and 'do it all' that we often forget what Christ *has* done for us and devalue the things that God values in us as Christian women.

What I would most like to see is all of us grasping the riches of his grace to such an extent that we are freed up to live passionately for him, recognising and using the unique gifts he has given each of us to do so.

How can we pray for you and for other pastors' wives?

How much time have we got?! Here would be some of my top needs for prayer in no particular order...

- That everything will be about Christ and for Christ and not for the sake of duty and appearance.
- To know Christ more intimately and therefore disciplined in my times of personal devotions.
- To seek to be the best helper that I can be to my husband by what I do and say and what I don't do and say!
- To keep us from being critical and bitter of others in the church.
- For the determination to rejoice always!
- To be always passionate about the Gospel regardless of other pressures.

Conference Reports

Pastors' Wives' Conference, Three Bridges Free Church, West Sussex, 7 - 8 September 2007

23 eager Pastors' wives converged on the conference, expectant of the wonderful fellowship and ministry experienced in previous years and we were not disappointed. It is a precious time of meeting and praying together, being able to share with one another, even to have an understanding shoulder to cry on and to be encouraged and challenged by the word of God. Our speaker was Sheila Stephen and she brought three sessions on 'Esther for Today.' What good reminders we had about the sovereignty of God and his unseen providential dealings with us all as he works all things to the good. Sheila also spoke on listening skills, challenging us not to be transmitters only but receivers. Gill Jacobs spoke on Autism in the Church, which was very enlightening and helpful. Diets went out the window as we enjoyed good hospitality and food. *'Have we really got to wait another year?!'*

Sheila Langston, Needham Market Evangelical Church.

North West Pastors' Wives Fellowship Day

In November, 22 of us met together for a refreshing day of mutual encouragement, delicious food and excellent teaching with Ann Benton. In the morning Ann highlighted the role of the pastor's wife as the reluctant counsellor and offered some very helpful advice for those of us who find ourselves in situations where we can feel out of our depth. We were urged not to worry over our lack of counselling skills because the church does not exist merely to meet the psychological needs of those around us, but to present the gospel. Our role in caring for one another is in sharing the truth that our lives are a small story, which is part of a much bigger story. In the afternoon Ann shared some amusing anecdotes of the practicalities involved in ministry and from 1 Timothy 5 urged us to view our church families as an extension of our own families. This session was more interactive. For those of us involved in planning the day it was so good to have such positive feedback both verbal and written. Women came away from the day both encouraged and challenged. We especially enjoyed the lovely meal and good conversations along with the prayer times all of which made it a memorable day for us all.

Kay Kinnaird, Bankhall Mission Church, Liverpool.

FOR WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Teacher to Apprentice to Church Worker – one Woman's Journey

Rachel Barraclough was a Primary School teacher for 8 years. She then did the Cornhill Training Course, whilst being a Church Assistant. She is now in full time paid employment with Christ Church, Surbiton, Surrey. These are a few of her reflections...

What made you make the move from secular to church employment?

Looking back, I think that God was at work even though I didn't fully realise it! I hadn't really planned to go down this route, but the opportunity to do Cornhill and work for church arose at a time when I was prepared to consider it. The Lord brought many circumstances together for it to happen.

How did you become equipped for your job in church?

The Cornhill Training Course gave me confidence in handling the Bible and teaching it to others. My previous teaching experience gave me some communication skills and the ability to deal with all kinds of people. So the two combined helped me a lot as I've sought to teach others about the Lord.

What is your current role at Christ Church?

It's very varied! I lead the music ministry, which includes running music practices and leading a home group, as well as taking an active part in our Sunday services. My other main re-

sponsibility is the oversight of the youth and children's ministries. In addition to this I work with our local linked primary school, running clubs for children and taking a few assemblies. I also run an annual holiday club and pick up other admin/general or pastoral issues as they arise. There is always something to do...

You worship in the church you 'work' in. What challenges does this bring?

I have found it quite different from being an ordinary member. My relationships with people have changed. I often feel responsible for people, rather than being one of the 'gang' and am sometimes privy to information that I can't divulge to others. This can cause a feeling of isolation. And taking a weekend off to visit friends and family is tricky too. I've recently tried to take

"To be involved in the church family and to see people grow in their love and service of Christ is a privilege."

odd days off and go away Thursday to Saturday which has been a good compromise.

What have been some of the joys of working for a church?

To be involved in the church family and to see people grow in their love and service of Christ is a privilege. This has been especially encouraging amongst some of the young people. To be able to train and encourage others to discover, develop and use their gifts, so that they can serve God and glorify him, is an amazing opportunity to be involved in.

Serving the Lord in any context brings its own challenges and rewards. Please do remember to pray and encourage

ladies you know in church employment.

Questions & Answers

Kath Knapman, part-time

"Please do remember to pray and encourage ladies you know in church employment."

Women's Pastoral Worker at Christ Church, Liverpool, is interviewed by Julia Jones, a member of the Women's Ministry Team

How did you become a Christian?

As a child, I went to church with my parents. I had some wonderful Sunday School teachers, who faithfully taught me week after week. When I was eleven I remember listening to a speaker at church. I can't remember exactly what he said, but only that while he spoke my heart was burning, and much of the teaching I had already received just fell into place. I went home, and talked to Jesus, and believe that at that time I became a Christian. Two months later, my Dad had a heart attack on the squash court and died. I loved him dearly and couldn't imagine life without him. But, while the adults around me were crying, and 'making arrangements', I sat and read my little Bible. Something inside me, at the heart of the numbness and ache I felt for some years, became very still and at rest because I knew the hope I read of was true. Three months later, one of my two best friends also died. She was a friend who'd talked to me about my grief, and now she was gone too. Life looked very hard, but my heavenly Father anchored my soul and gave me a hope.

“Without realising, I was learning about church pastoral care through those years.”

“Life looked very hard, but my heavenly Father anchored my soul and gave me a hope.”

How has God led you since then?

My time at Lancaster University CU was a pivotal time in my life. We had a mission every year, with evangelism training, and I loved it! Just prior to my leaving for University, a number of friends had become Christians. I used to travel home to Southport every weekend to run a discipleship group for my home church. Without realising, I was learning about church pastoral care through those years. On graduating, I moved to Liverpool to be a

Relay Worker at Liverpool Hope. During that period, I became passionate about 1-2-1 ministry. On finishing Relay, I began to train as a nurse. I became a member of Bridge Chapel, and started co-ordinating the Student Ministry there. It was a truly encouraging environment, in which I was given numerous opportunities

to serve, and explore my gifts. At this time, I began serving as an Associate Staff Worker with the UCCF North West team. I qualified as a staff nurse in 2002, and began work in Cardiothoracic Surgery, then moving to Trauma and Orthopaedics. In 2004 the Elders at Christ Church Liverpool advertised for a part time Women's Pastoral Worker. I embarked on the process, and was offered the position. After much prayer, discussion and thinking, I decided to accept. I became a part time Staff Nurse, and part time Women's Worker in 2004. My main roles at Christ Church are teaching the Bible to girls through 1-2-1 work, and equipping them to go on and do that with other women. I provide pastoral support, and seek to encourage the girls to be doing this for one another. I help on the staff team both generally, and in supervising our female staff. I organize courses for women to look specifically at issues relating to the Gospel and womanhood.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of being part time in nursing and church work?

The advantages are that being an

orthopaedic nurse in a busy and under-resourced city centre hospital helps me appreciate some of the pressures that many of our church family are under. My personal holiness is under constant

“I hope that my working week reflects that there is no sacred-secular divide...”

assault in that environment, as is the case for many at Christ Church in their workplace. I hope that my working week reflects that there is no sacred-secular divide, but, my Father is always with me, and wants me to live for him. Furthermore, working in the hospital gives me opportunities for evangelism that may not be possible if I was in full time paid gospel ministry.

The main disadvantage is that I tend to feel less than adequate at both jobs, because I can't spend all week concentrating on either.

What do you enjoy most about ministry?

I love seeing Jesus transform lives because of his grace: it may be the miracle of someone becoming a Christian, a Fresher grasping a Bible truth for the first time, someone overcoming bitterness with grace, a girl who feels lonely reaching out to someone who is struggling because that's a gospel thing to do. It is an amazing and wonderful privilege to see God at work. I am also enjoying seeing our women ministering to one another.

What would be your advice for someone considering women's ministry?

The main things I've learnt over the last 3 years are:

- God's character is beautiful, and I can trust him with everything
 - The Gospel is always the answer
- Thus, my advice would be to keep growing in

“Women's Ministry is a privilege open to all Christian women, so go for it!”

the gospel, applying it to yourself and those around you. Also, speak to your leaders about ministry opportunities amongst the women at your church e.g. is there a younger Christian woman you could meet with 1-2-1? Could you organize an evangelistic event with some of your friends? Can you look out for those who maybe don't have anyone to talk to after the morning service? Women's Ministry is a privilege open to all Christian women, so go for it! That is the best way to explore whether a full time/paid role may be for you.

Ministry to Street workers: A Testimony

The One25 Project is a registered charity with a Christian ethos providing services to women involved in street-based sex work in and around St. Paul's, Bristol, and to those who have exited the industry. Val Jeal, the founder of One25, shares testimony of the way the Lord led her into this vital ministry.

My roller-coaster journey began in 1984 when, at the age of 44, I became a Christian, worshipping in The Salvation Army in St. Paul's. Each Sunday as I turned up for worship I came into contact with alcoholics, drug addicts, homeless men and women, and sometimes with women selling sex from the entrance to the church. It was all quite shocking and 'in my face'.

Over the first 6 years of my Christian life God laid these people on my heart and gently prodded me to do something – to come out of my comfort zone. At this time I was employed in Bristol University Library and as the main earner in our family. The prodding from the Holy Spirit became stronger till I was convicted that I should be working in St. Paul's, with those on the margins of our society. The Fellowship agreed that I should start a community project called The Candle Project working from a semi-derelict building on Ashley Road. In 1991, aged 50, I resigned from the Bristol University, where I had worked for 25 years.

I spent the first 2 years walking the streets of St. Paul's each morning – getting to know the local residents, shopkeepers, homeless people, heavy drinkers and the addicts. The female sex workers would have nothing to do with me. The work grew rapidly with many people seeking help. By the end of 1994 I was in real trouble spiritually, close to

“The breaking was a painful gift to me – it was also the beginning of a new and deeper relationship with God.”

burnout and felt separated from God. I asked for a sabbatical leave in order to sort myself out, and was given February, March and April 1995.

During March 1995 I went to Chicago to volunteer in Genesis House, a Christian safe house for prostitutes. After just one week the final breaking came for me. I had been unable to pray for many months, but at the end of that first week, in my small apartment and alone, I fell to my knees. My prayer that night was 'God help me'. At the end of my own resources God met me as I cried out to him. The breaking was a painful gift to me – it was also the beginning of a new and deeper relationship with God.

“One25 is proof of how the Lord can work through us in ways that would amaze us when we say yes to the prompting he gives us.”

I returned to Bristol in April 1995, resigned from The Candle Project and in May 1995 started One25 working with female sex workers from 125 Cheltenham Road, the basement given to us by a Catholic Priest, Raphael Appleby.

One25 consisted of 4 women, all of us volunteers: there was no money, salary or guidelines. We formulated the policies and how we would work. We knew there was a gap in the provision of care to these women – and tried to meet it.

If stepping out into The Candle Project was scary, this was terrifying! The other three volunteers all had other commitments, so I took on building a project and organizing the work. We were a great team, and were quickly joined by other volunteers. We had just £5 in the bank donated by a very unsavoury character! The project grew, with God's guiding hand and provision.

Since those early days, the project has gone from strength to strength and now operates from a budget of approx £250,000 per annum, and has a Drop -in four afternoons a week, an outreach service in large yellow

transit van five nights a week and outreach on foot two nights a week. There is also a full time casework team of three staff plus a social work

student who work more closely with women wanting to make changes in their lives.

Help line for Minister's Wives and for Women in Ministry

We encourage minister's wives and women in ministry to have prayer partners, ideally with someone in a similar position, so that difficult issues can be shared and prayed over. But if you feel there is no-one you can share with, and would value being put in touch (by phone) with an experienced minister's wife or woman worker, you can contact Elisabeth Smyth at the FIEC office on 01793 619603, and she will do her best to help you.

Privacy will be respected.

**Conference for Ministers' Wives—Saturday 10th May
Bethel Evangelical Church Wigston, Leicester**

There is to be a day conference for ministers' wives on Saturday 10th May 2008 at Bethel Evangelical Church Wigston, Leicester.

The theme will be 'Nurturing the next Generation'.

Ian and Nina Fry will bring a challenging combination of Biblical teaching and personal testimony.

Topics will include:

- How we got to where we are: Teens and the family
- Pressures on young people today: a pastoral response
- Pressures on Christian family life today: a personal testimony
- Nurturing young people in the Lord: a Biblical framework

Ian leads the youth work course at Oak Hill College, London. Nina has been involved in teaching for many years.

We trust that this day will equip all who attend to minister more effectively in our families, churches and communities.

For further information and booking form, please contact:

Mrs Hazel Watts,
73 Broadway,
Coventry
CV5 6NS
Tel. 02476 670694
email paulwatts@fsbc.org.uk

The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches
39 The Point, Market Harborough LE16 7QU
Telephone 01858 434540
e-mail admin@fiec.org.uk www.fiec.org.uk

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Team members: Sharon James, Julia Jones, Annie Leggett, Jane McNabb,
Andrew and Kath Paterson, Elisabeth Smyth, Heather Stephens
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